

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY HEW/OIAM:JEHRMAN:GW

APPROVED BY A/BF/FC:RWHITENER

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IH:JGREEN

OES/APT:JFRY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

UNCLAS STATE 239564

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, TS

SUBJECT:SPECIAL FOREIGN CURRENCY PROGRAMS -- FY 77

REF: A. TUNIS 5915

B. STATE 196771

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM WYATT

1. LAURENCE WYATT, SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TO HEW SECRETARY MATHEWS, HAS ASKED DEPARTMENT TO TRANSMIT FOLLOWING LETTER FROM HIM TO AMBASSADOR:

2. QUOTE DEAR MR. AMBASSADOR:

THIS DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED THAT THE PHASEOUT OF OUR COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM IN TUNISIA SHOULD BE AS ORDERLY AS POSSIBLE. THEREFORE, SECRETARY MATHEWS HAS RECENTLY WRITTEN TO SECRETARY SIMON TO UNCLASSIFIED

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REQUEST THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT'S COOPERATION IN WORKING OUT DETAILS OF A PHASEOUT LASTING BEYOND FISCAL YEAR 1977. I AM SENDING YOU A COPY OF THIS LETTER UNDER SEPARATE COVER FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

3. WE NATURALLY HOPE THAT SECRETARY SIMON WILL RESPOND FAVORABLY TO OUR REQUEST. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH TREASURY'S

AGREEMENT TO A SOMEWHAT MORE PROLONGED PHASEOUT WOULD HELP, IT WOULD NOT IN ITSELF SOLVE OUR PROBLEM. RECENT CABLES BETWEEN YOU AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE DISCUSSED THE DINAR REQUIREMENTS VARIOUS AGENCIES HAVE SET FORTH FOR FISCAL 1977. AS YOU AND STATE POINT OUT, THE TOTAL OF THESE REQUIREMENTS FAR EXCEEDS THE ANTICIPATED AVAILABILITY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS REQUESTED, AND YOU HAVE SET FORTH, A LISTING OF EMBASSY PRIORITIES.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FIRST PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN TO USIA'S CONTINUING PROGRAMS (FOR WHICH THAT AGENCY HAS REQUESTED \$540,000). HOWEVER, WE FEEL THAT THERE MAY BE A QUESTION AS TO HOW THE OVERALL U.S. GOVERNMENT INTEREST IS BETTER SERVED -- BY PLACING HIGHER PRIORITY ON THE ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY IN TUNISIA OR BY ALLOWING THE SCIENCE RESEARCH PROGRAM TO PHASE OUT IN A WAY WHICH WOULD REALIZE, RATHER THAN JEOPARDIZE, THE INVESTMENT IT REPRESENTS. IN SAYING THIS, I DO NOT WISH TO DISCOUNT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FBO PROGRAM, EITHER IN TERMS OF ITS BENEFITS TO THE EMBASSY AND YOUR PERSONNEL OR ITS BALANCE OF PAYMENTS ADVANTAGES. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE IMPORTANCE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC OF HEW'S COLLABORATIVE SCIENCE RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN TUNISIA SHOULD ALSO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

5. HEW -- AS IS THE CASE WITH OTHER U.S. GOVERNMENT SCIENCE RESEARCH AGENCIES -- ENGAGES IN FOREIGN RESEARCH TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES. OUR MANDATE FROM CONGRESS REQUIRES US TO SHOW AN INTEREST EXISTS BEFORE RESEARCH CAN BEGIN. AS YOUR CABLE SUGGESTS, OUR PROJECTS ALSO HELP TO PROMOTE U.S.-TUNISIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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FOR EXAMPLE, THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE'S TRACHOMA

PROJECT (07-075-S) IS HELPING TO CONTROL A SCOURGE FACED BY HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TUNISIA'S RURAL POOR. HOWEVER, OUR PRINCIPAL INTEREST IN THIS, AS IN OTHER PROJECTS, IS THE IMPACT RESEARCH RESULTS CAN HAVE ON OUR OWN POPULATION. TRACHOMA IS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM IN THE AMERICAN INDIAN COMMUNITY, AND IT IS THIS CONSIDERATION THAT LEADS TO OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DISEASE IN TUNISIA AND TO OUR REQUEST FOR \$100,000 MORE TO PURSUE THE PROJECT THROUGH TO COMPLETION.

6. BESIDES TRACHOMA, OUR OTHER MAJOR TUNISIAN PUBLIC

HEALTH FUND REQUEST IS FOR BREAST CANCER. IN YOUR CABLE YOU NOTED THE "VERY SUBSTANTIAL SUPPLEMENT"

WE ARE REQUESTING FOR THIS PROJECT. I SHARED YOUR CONCERN OVER THIS LARGE SUM AND THEREFORE ASKED THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER AND REPORT BACK TO ME. PORTIONS OF THAT REPORT, PREPARED BY DR. MORRIS JONES OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH, APPEAR BELOW. I BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT DR. JONES'S REMARKS CONSTITUTE A COMPELLING ARGUMENT AGAINST U.S. GOVERNMENT ABANDONMENT OF THIS PROJECT.

7. WE HOLD THAT SAVING AND IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF AMERICAN LIVES THROUGH PHASED-OUT TERMINATION OF SCIENCE RESEARCH PROJECTS IS A VALID INVESTMENT FOR WHAT REMAINS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT HOLDINGS OF TUNISIAN DINARS. TO CITE AGAIN THE CASE OF BREAST CANCER, AS OF THIS DATE HEW HAS INVESTED IN THIS PROJECT NEARLY \$200,000 WORTH OF DINARS AND SIMILARLY SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF DOLLAR REIMBURSED STAFF-HOURS IN THE UNITED STATES. AN ADDITIONAL INCREMENT FROM FY 1976 FUNDS IS BEING PROCESSED. UNLIKE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION OR LAND PURCHASE, A RESEARCH UNDERTAKING CANNOT BE SUSPENDED FOR A YEAR AND THEN RESUMED WITHOUT VERY SERIOUS DAMAGE. THE FACT IS THAT THIS CONSIDERABLE UNCLASSIFIED

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INVESTMENT AND OTHERS LIKE IT, MUST EITHER RECEIVE FULL BACKING IN FY 1977 FUNDS TO REALIZE ITS OBJECTIVE OR ELSE BE WRITTEN OFF AS A NEAR-TOTAL LOSS.

8. AS A COROLLARY TO THIS CONSIDERATION, A DISTINCTION SHOULD BE DRAWN BETWEEN PROJECTS WHICH HAVE ALREADY BEEN OBLIGATED AND NEW ONES, IN WHICH OUR INVESTMENT IS MINIMAL. THIS CORRESPONDS TO YOUR OWN PRIORITY LISTING, IN WHICH YOU STIPULATE THAT CONTINUING PROJECTS SHOULD TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER THE LATTER. ACCORDINGLY, I HAVE ADVISED HEW AGENCIES THAT FUNDS FOR NEW PROJECTS IN TUNISIA SHOULD NOT BE REQUESTED, AND HAVE NOTIFIED THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO REDUCE OUR DINAR REQUEST FIGURE FOR RESEARCH BY \$415,000. SOME LIMITED, FURTHER REDUCTIONS MAY ALSO BE POSSIBLE BY DEOBLIGATION OF UNEXPENDED BALANCES ON DORMANT PROJECTS.

9. MR. AMBASSADOR, WE APPRECIATE THE INTEREST WHICH YOU HAVE SHOWN IN THE HEW-TUNISIA COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONSIDER AND SUPPORT OUR POSITION THAT AN ORDERLY PHASEOUT OF THE SCIENCE RESEARCH PROGRAM IS OF HIGH IMPORTANCE, THAT IT MERITS ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THESE LAST MONTHS OF THE SFC PROGRAM, AND THAT OTHER IMPORTANT OBJECTIVES,

SUCH AS ACQUIRING ADDITIONAL PARCELS OF LAND IN TUNIS,
SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONDEMN IT TO AN UNTIMELY
END. SINCERELY YOURS, LAURENCE WYATT UNQUOTE

10. EXCERPTS FROM DR. MORRIS JONES'S REPORT FOLLOW:

QUOTE. . . THIS PROJECT HAS DEVELOPED INTO A VERY
IMPORTANT AND SCIENTIFICALLY PRODUCTIVE STUDY WHICH
HAS GENERATED WIDESPREAD INTEREST AMONG ONCOLOGICAL
(CANCER) RESEARCHERS IN THE U.S. . . . IT WAS ESTABLISHED
TO CHARACTERIZE THE "POUSEE EVOLUTIVE" (PEV) FORM
OF BREAST CANCER BECAUSE MOST AMERICAN SCIENTISTS
WERE EITHER IGNORANT OF THE ENTITY OR DID NOT BELIEVE
IN ITS EXISTENCE. THOSE WHO WERE AWARE OF PEV KNEW
THAT ITS CHARACTERIZATION WOULD HAVE TREMENDOUS WORLDWIDE
IMPLICATIONS IN THE ETIOLOGY AND CONTROL OF BREAST
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CANCER, A VIEW WHICH HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIATED BY THIS
STUDY.

AS A RESULT OF THE FIRST SERIES OF STUDIES REPORTED
FORMALLY AT THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH
AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON DETECTION
AND PREVENTION OF CANCER AND DISCUSSED AT INFORMAL
MEETINGS AT NIH AND IN NEW YORK, THERE HAVE BEEN THE
FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENTS:

1. VIRAL ONCOLOGISTS BELIEVE THIS COLLABORATION MAY
NOT ONLY INCREASE THE CHANCES OF ISOLATING A HUMAN
BREAST CANCER VIRUS BUT MAY ALLOW THE TESTING OF THE
HYPOTHESIS THAT DIFFERENT STAINS OF THIS VIRUS EXIST
IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD. ACTIVE COLLABORATION
HAS BEEN SET UP WITH VIRAL ONCOLOGY-SUPPORTED
LABORATORIES IN VIRGINIA, TEXAS, NCI, AND THE FREDERICK
CANCER RESEARCH CENTER AT FORT DETRICK, MARYLAND.

2. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. BREAST CANCER TASK
FORCE HAVE EMPHASIZED THE BIOLOGIC IMPORTANCE OF THIS
DISEASE AND ITS VALUE AS A MODEL FOR THE FREQUENT
OCCURRENCE OF EXPLOSIVE LATE METASTASES IN AMERICAN
WOMEN.

3. CHEMOTHERAPISTS FROM MANY COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE
THE VALUE OF DR. MOURALI'S PATIENT GROUP IN ATTEMPTING
TO FIND THE MOST EFFECTIVE CHEMOTHERAPY FOR CONTROLLING
THIS DISEASE. NCI WILL SUPPLY DRUGS TO DR. MOURALI
AT NO COST TO ENHANCE THE INITIATION OF THE CHEMOTHERAPY
ASPECT OF THIS PROJECT, AND IT IS HOPED THAT LONG-TERM

SUPPORT FOR THIS COMPONENT OF THE PROGRAM WILL BE

FORTHCOMING THROUGH THE BREAST CANCER TASK FORCE.

4. PATHOLOGISTS AND CLINICIANS HAVE REQUESTED A STUDY COMPARING THE PATHOLOGY OF INFLAMMATORY BREAST CARCINOMA IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PEV FORM OF BREAST CANCER IN TUNISIA TO IMPROVE THE PATHOLOGISTS' ABILITY TO ACCESS THIS DISEASE AND PROVIDE MORE USEFUL INFORMATION TO U.S. CLINICIANS WHO MAY BE DEALING WITH THIS ENTITY.
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5. EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AT NCI AND THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCY FOR RESEARCH IN CANCER (IARC), LYON, FRANCE, LONG IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROJECT AND INVOLVED IN ITS INITIAL EVALUATION, CONTINUE TO ADVISE DR. MOURALI AND TO SUPPORT THE NEED FOR A FULL-TIME EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY. THE FIELD STUDIES AREA OF NCI HAS OFFERED TO PROVIDE STATISTICAL SUPPORT TO DR. MOURALI BECAUSE OF THE WORLDWIDE IMPLICATIONS OF HIS STUDIES FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH.

THE ABOVE REACTIONS ARE ONLY AN INDICATION OF THE MEDICAL INTEREST RAISED BY MR. MOURALI'S REPORTS. EPIDEMIOLOGIC EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT THIS DISEASE MAY DECLINE IN INCIDENCE AS SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN TUNISIA IMPROVE. WITHOUT THE TIMELY SUPPORT OF SFCP FUNDS, THE UNITED STATES AND ONCOLOGISTS ALL OVER THE WORLD WOULD HAVE SUFFERED UNFORTUNATE DELAYS IN THEIR EFFORTS TO CONTROL BREAST CANCER BECAUSE OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THIS IMPORTANT MODEL. UNQUOTE

FYI: THIS LETTER IS BEING TRANSMITTED BY DEPARTMENT CABLE TO INSURE FULL AND PROMPT DISTRIBUTION AMONG INTERESTED PARTIES. HOWEVER, IT REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF THE ORIGINATING AGENCY, RATHER THAN THOSE OF THE DEPARTMENT.
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